

## Tehran researchers uncover likely final portrait of Yazdegerd III

Arts & Culture Desk

Researchers at University of Tehran identified what they believe is the last known image of Yazdegerd III, the final ruler of the Sasanian Empire, following fresh archaeological excavations at the ancient Bazeh Hur fire temple in northeastern Iran, according to findings published by Italy's peer-reviewed 'East and West' journal.

The discovery emerged from an excavation led by Meysam Labbaf-Khaniki, a faculty member in the university's archaeology department, at the late-Sasanian sanctuary situated about 70 kilometers south of Mashhad along one of ancient Iran's principal trade arteries linking Khorasan to Sistan, Kerman and the central plateau, CHTN reported.

Archaeologists uncovered a stucco panel depicting four figures, including a seated royal figure distinguished by elaborate footwear, ceremonial trousers and imperial ornamentation associated with Sasanian kingship.

Although only the lower section of the panel survived, researchers said archaeological and historical evidence strongly



suggests the enthroned figure is Yazdegerd III, who ruled until the Arab conquest in the seventh century.

The excavation also yielded fragments believed to belong to a Sasanian royal crown. Researchers noted that the unfinished relief and its concealment behind a mud-brick wall pointed to a period of political upheaval during the empire's final days. Historical accounts in 'Futuh al-Buldan' indicate Yazdegerd III sought refuge in Khorasan shortly before his death.

The Bazeh Hur complex, thought by some scholars to correspond to the revered Adur Burzen-Mihr fire temple, has been excavated over eight seasons since 2013. The site revealed a vast religious structure adorned with refined stucco work and wall paintings, showing the artistic vitality of late-Sasanian Iran.

## Iran's cultural legacy draws global alliance for repair

Arts & Culture Desk

A senior Iranian cultural heritage official said in Tehran that 149 historic buildings, archaeological sites and museums across 20 provinces were damaged during the US-Israeli strikes which began February 28, as domestic volunteers, diaspora specialists and international institutions move to support a coordinated restoration effort. Farhad Azizi, Director-General for National and World Heritage Sites at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, told IRNA that Iran has begun mobilizing what he described as a "broad wave of global solidarity" to safeguard affected heritage assets.

He said UNESCO had expressed readiness to support World Heritage-listed sites and earmarked resources for emergency assistance, while preparations were under way to send experts once conditions allow full access.



Debris at the historical monument Golestan Palace after it was damaged in an Israeli and US strike, amid the US-Israeli conflict with Iran, in Tehran, Iran, March 3, 2026.

● IRNA

Azizi said more than 17 formal communications had been sent to international bodies, including UNESCO and ICESCO, to document the scale of the damage and secure technical cooperation.

He added that Japan had also indicated interest in providing technical and financial assistance, including specialist training and equipment support for restoration teams. He noted that participation is being structured through a framework allowing volunteers to contribute under corporate social responsibility schemes, with a strong role envisaged for Iranian professionals abroad. These experts, including architects, archaeologists and conservation specialists, are expected to



support documentation, damage assessment and phased reconstruction work, forming what officials describe as a four-stage recovery plan.

Azizi said the process begins with detailed documentation and assessment, followed by resource mobilization, prioritization of sites and finally restoration of the most critical heritage locations.

He added that preliminary emergency measures have already been completed, while a second, more detailed technical evaluation is now under

way to classify the extent of damage province by province. He emphasized that while state resources remain central, international cooperation and volunteer engagement are becoming "key pillars" of long-term preservation efforts, framing Iran's cultural heritage as part of a wider shared human legacy.

Restoration plans, he said, will proceed in parallel with training programs and sustained collaboration with international heritage institutions.

## Digital platforms to play bigger role in promoting resistance art

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi called on Monday for the creation of a national platform to archive and consolidate artistic productions linked to the Ramadan War which began on February 28, while urging wider circulation of resistance-themed works across official media outlets and digital platforms. Addressing the 125th session of the Art Council in Tehran, Salehi said cultural policymaking must ensure artistic productions reach audiences "in sufficient measure" through both conventional broadcasters and

cyberspace, as the country strengthens cultural resilience in the wake of recent regional tensions, IRNA reported.

The council reviewed a policy report by the Research Institute for Culture, Art and Communication on the role of art in reinforcing social resilience during times of crisis, with discussions centered on the experience of the Ramadan War.

Salehi also pressed for the establishment of a comprehensive database to register, categorize and document artistic output produced during the conflict period, describing reliable data and coordinated cultural plan-

ning as essential tools for connecting policymaking with social realities.

Council members examined proposals including the therapeutic use of art in mental health strategies, support for independent artists and civic organizations, expansion of local cultural spaces in major cities, and broader use of digital media to widen public access to cultural content.

The meeting also highlighted the role of documentary filmmaking and cinema in preserving collective memory, alongside the growing influence of short-form digital productions designed for online audiences.

## Urban regeneration study from Iran shortlisted at UN-habitat forum in Baku

Social Desk

A research project by an Iranian academic from the University of Birjand was shortlisted as a best practice at a United Nations human settlements competition in Baku in 2025, according to the organizers of the 13th World Urban Forum, highlighting innovative approaches to sustainable urban regeneration and financing.

The study, led by Mohammad Eskandari Sani, a faculty member in the Department of Geography at the University of Birjand, alongside research collaborator Afsaneh Hasani, was selected in the international 'Best Practices in Urban Regeneration 2025' competition held

on the sidelines of WUF13, convened under the UN-HABITAT framework in cooperation with Shanghai University.

The project, titled 'Financial Models and Methods for Urban Regeneration Leveraging Startup Potential: A Case Study of Birjand City', was recognized as a shortlisted practice following evaluation by an international panel of experts, positioning it among applied models addressing sustainable urban development challenges.

In a dedicated session at the forum, Eskandari Sani presented a keynote address entitled 'Empowering Marginalized Cities via the Financial Carbon Twin,' a concept that drew attention from urban development spe-

cialists attending the global gathering, where cities are increasingly seeking hybrid financial tools to unlock regeneration pathways.

At a formal recognition ceremony, the certificate of achievement was presented by Pietro Elisei, chair of the IOPUR expert panel, underscoring the project's inclusion among notable international submissions. The World Urban Forum, regarded as a leading global platform for urban sustainability discourse under the United Nations, convened experts, policymakers and researchers in Baku, where emerging financing models and technology-driven urban transformation frameworks featured prominently on the agenda.



**World MS Day**  
**30 May 2026**

**Controlling MS through Resilience in Crisis**

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